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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2650
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 3777
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 6115
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 7579
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 4314
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 000994

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [PINS](#) [IR](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: JAPANESE FM NAKASONE'S PENDING TRIP TO TEHRAN:
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

REF: A. TOKYO 956

[B](#). TOKYO 938

[C](#). CANBERRA 414

[D](#). LONDON 668

TOKYO 00000994 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James P. Zumwalt for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Japanese Foreign Minister Nakasone plans to meet with Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Foreign Minister Motaki when he visits Tehran May 2, reaffirmed a MOFA contact. The Foreign Ministry realizes the sensitivity of this trip, particularly coming as it does closely on the heels of FM Motaki's April 17 visit to Tokyo, where he met Prime Minister Aso and FM Nakasone. MOFA Vice Minister Mitoji Yabunaka and Deputy Minister for Political Affairs Kenichiro Sasae have both met with the Iranian Ambassador in the past several days to stress in clear terms Japan's expectations for the visit. Japan will strongly press Iran on the Saberi case, will urge them to respond positively to recent openings by both the United States and the EU 3 + 3, and request yet again that Iran cease uranium enrichment activities as required by United Nations Security Council resolutions. Despite our attempts to discourage the visit altogether or at least have Nakasone refrain from meeting Ahmadinejad, MOFA responds that it believes Tehran needs to continue to hear tough words from its "friends" and at the highest levels. END SUMMARY.

U.S.-JAPAN DIALOGUE RE IRAN MEETINGS

[1](#)2. (C) Embassy Tokyo Political Officer met April 28 with MOFA Second Middle East Division Principal Deputy Director Yukiya Hamamoto, following VFM Yabunaka's offer to Charge d'Affaires to provide a readout of his meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Tokyo Seyed Abbas Araghchi (Ref A). Hamamoto recounted the contacts between the U.S. and Japan that have taken place concerning FM Nakasone's pending visit to Tehran:

-- On April 21, Under Secretary Burns spoke with DFM Sasae in Australia (Ref C) and made the following four points: (1) Iran must make a decision whether it will or will not accept the "freeze for freeze" offer made by the EU 3 + 3; (2) Japan should press Iran to obtain the release of imprisoned American Citizen Roxana Saberi; (3) Japan and the United States must be prepared to take further measures to increase pressure on Iran, if necessary; and (4) Japan should be

careful to limit its involvement with Iran on the joint projects it is proposing with regard to Afghanistan;

-- On April 21, Ambassador to Washington Fujisaki spoke with Deputy Secretary Steinberg, who expressed "discomfort" about Nakasone's trip to Tehran;

-- On April 21, Ambassador Fujisaki met with S/SAGSWA Ross who told him Nakasone should not make the trip; and

-- On April 24, MOFA Director General for Middle Eastern and African Affairs Suzuki met with Charge to inform him that Nakasone would, indeed, make the trip. (NOTE: Charge also subsequently met April 27 with DFM Sasae to reiterate our concerns about the visit (septel). END NOTE.)

IRANIAN AMBASSADOR CALLED IN TO MOFA

13. (C) Following these communications, Iranian Ambassador to Tokyo Araghchi was called in by DFM Sasae on April 24 and by VFM Yabunaka on April 27. Both explained to him Japan's concerns about and expectations for the visit. According to Hamamoto, both Yabunaka and Sasae made it unmistakably clear that it would not be enough for Nakasone to simply visit Tehran and engage in meetings; rather, the Japanese expect a positive outcome from the visit. Sasae made clear Japan's very strong concerns about the Saberi case. He twice referred to her as a "hostage," which, according to Hamamoto, elicited a pained look on Araghchi's face. Araghchi replied that he would convey this message to Tehran, but repeated the official line that Saberi is an Iranian. He said that her father is an Iranian and that, accordingly, under Iranian

TOKYO 00000994 002.2 OF 003

law, his daughter Roxana is also considered to be Iranian. With regard to Roxana's mother, who is of Japanese origin, Araghchi said that because she is married to an Iranian, she too, is considered to be Iranian. In other words, in Tehran's view this is not a case that involves a foreign national; it is a case in which the government of Iran is dealing with an Iranian citizen.

14. (C) Hamamoto observed that Araghchi knows and has a personal connection with Saberi. (See Ref D.) Apparently, she was a student of his several years ago. The Japanese believe that he is sincerely interested in getting her released and is doing what he can. However, they think he fears that pressing too hard might "give the wrong impression in Tehran."

15. (C) VFM Yabunaka also raised the Saberi case when he met with Araghchi. In addition, he discussed President Ahmadinejad's recent speech in Geneva, the nuclear issue, and the need for Iran to respond positively to overtures by the EU 3 and the United States. On the Geneva speech, Yabunaka told the Iranian that the content was unacceptable and that the timing was awful. Hamamoto reported that Ambassador Araghchi did not respond, apparently because he lacked instructions. On the nuclear issue, Yabunaka said this issue would be raised once again and that the Japanese expected some type of positive response. Araghchi assured him that Tehran is preparing a response to the EU 3 proposal.

JAPANESE EXPECTATIONS

16. (C) Asked what would constitute a "successful visit" from the Japanese perspective, Hamamoto responded that while recognizing it is unlikely that Saberi will be released to the Japanese, leaving Tehran "empty-handed" would be viewed as a disaster by the Japanese public, the United States, and the international community. Tokyo thinks the Saberi case is

out of Motaki's hands, and this is one reason MOFA believes a meeting with Ahmadinejad is necessary. Nakasone also plans to make it very clear to the Iranians that Tokyo views North Korea as a real threat, and is extremely concerned about indications Pyongyang may somehow be collaborating with Tehran on their missile and/or nuclear programs. Nakasone will tell the Iranians that while it is up to them to decide who to be friends with, Japan would view Iranian assistance to North Korea and normal bilateral relations between Japan and Iran as incompatible. Hamamoto said the one "deliverable" from the visit would be a joint statement concerning limited Japanese-Iranian cooperation on issues pertaining to Afghanistan.

READOUT OF MOTAKI MEETINGS IN TOKYO

17. (C) Hamamoto also provided a readout of FM Motaki's meetings on April 16 with Prime Minister Aso and FM Nakasone. PM Aso did not raise the Saberi case and focused mainly on the nuclear issue. He told Motaki that Iran must gain the trust of the international community. In other words, no one disputes Tehran's right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful use, but Iranian actions are leading many to conclude the program is not entirely peaceful. Aso also stressed that Iran must move now to improve its relationship with the United States. President Obama has made clear that the U.S. is willing to engage in a dialogue and Iran must not miss this opportunity. Motaki responded that Iran is listening "seriously and with respect" to President Obama, but actions speak louder than words. Prime Minister Aso also discussed Pakistan with Motaki, with both expressing concern about the rise of extremism in that country. Motaki's meeting with FM Nakasone followed basically the same script, reported Hamamoto, but with more of a focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

WHY ENGAGE?

18. (C) When asked why it was necessary for Nakasone to travel

TOKYO 00000994 003.2 OF 003

to Tehran so soon after having just met with Motaki in Tokyo, Hamamoto replied that Motaki had accepted Japan's invitation to attend the multi-lateral Pakistan meetings being held in Tokyo on April 18 after Nakasone had already agreed to visit Tehran. Apparently Motaki agreed to come on the understanding that his visit to Tokyo would not cause the Japanese to call off Nakasone's trip to Tehran.

19. (C) Hamamoto said the MOFA is very cognizant of the fact that Iran will probably try to exploit the upcoming meetings to make it appear that there is discord among the Western allies about what to do Iran. He agreed that Ahmadinejad's recent remarks were unacceptable and that the international community needs to maintain a firm and unified front. However, Japan believes it important and necessary to directly engage and press Iran on issues such as the Saberi case, the nuclear program, and relations with the U.S. and the west at the very highest possible levels. He promised that MOFA will provide a readout once the meetings are finished.

ZUMWALT